



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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August 16, 2006

FEDERAL JURY IN MIDLAND CONVICTS OILMAN

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that a federal jury has found seventy-seven year old John Skelton of Knoxville, Arkansas guilty of trying to extort money from a Midland businessman.

In a jury trial before United States District Judge Robert Junell in Midland, Texas, Skelton was convicted of transmitting in interstate commerce a threat to kill another individual with the intent to extort \$300,000.

“Mr. Skelton’s threats in this case to have his victim ‘taken to the country and shot’ have shown him to be a ruthless and dangerous man,” stated United States Attorney Johnny Sutton.

The defendant was convicted of capital murder in Ector County in 1983 in connection with a car bomb explosion that killed one of his former employees. He was on death row until 1990 when the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals reversed his conviction.

A bond hearing to determine whether the defendant will be freed pending his October 31, 2006, sentencing is scheduled for Thursday, August 17th, 2006. The government has requested no bond. He faces up to twenty years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. This case was investigated by the FBI and the Texas Rangers, and is being prosecuted for the government by Assistant United States Attorney John Klassen.

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